

A Peal of Bells

LAST WEDNESDAY, being the first in the month, I was sitting in, as usual, with the Central Executive. (I say 'sitting in' because I am not a member of that august body but, by a custom of uncertain origin, am permitted to attend its meetings). My attention wandered as my eye fell upon a piece of furniture standing in the corner of our meeting room in Trinity Square: I had seen it before but not for a great many years. On a shabby wooden frame, six feet high, hangs an octave of discoloured metal tubes, with a hammer on a hook beside them—a peal of tubular bells. They led my mind back to another night.

1918: The Passing Bell

The Retreat had been on for days and nights uncounted, sleepless, inevitable. The Second Army was being pushed back, stoutly resisting, into the sea. It seemed destined to be our Dunkirk, the end of the world.

Some time after midnight I found myself in a 'Tin Lizzie', one of Henry Ford's 'flying bedsteads' of the first heroic vintage, passing, for the second or third time that day, through the deserted streets of Poperinghe. The town, under fire, was officially evacuated, but as I came to the door of Talbot House I felt certain that Tubby was still disobeying the order. My driver and I were exhausted, and the British answer to that condition is tea. We stopped and entered by the big door ajar.

Tubby himself, in military *déshabille*, was standing in the hall. He looked more worried than I had ever seen him. While tea was brewing he said, "You've heard the news? The front line

at the moment runs through Reninghelst churchyard." Having been that way a few hours before, I could quite believe it. "They'll be in Pop. before the morning", he went on. "What are you going to do, Tubby?", I asked. "I'm stopping here", he said, "to give the Kaiser his breakfast." "Anything I can do for you?" "You can save some of the stuff." The 'stuff' was the precious furniture of the Upper Room, now stacked for safety in a tiny room off the hall.

In the dark and silent street we piled a load of incongruous passengers into my open car. The Carpenter's Bench was already in a railway truck somewhere, I think, but much remained to be saved. On the top of the load we laid the big black and gold carpet, which today is spread again in front of the altar of the Old House. And on the top of that, a last after-thought, we put the peal of tubular bells which on so many nights of the war had summoned the household of Talbot House to family prayers. Tubby and I shook hands: we both believed it was not Good-night but Good-bye. And as a last token between us he put into my pocket a little book, Weymouth's translation of the New Testament. Its green covers are a little warped today by the 'blitz' which touched them over twenty years later. Inside them can be read, in fading ink, the inscription "Barkis from Tubby, T. H., April 28, 1918." There is no book of mine I am more glad to have salvaged.

A minute later I was on my way to the French border. The road between the screens of camouflage netting was rough with shelling; we drove fast and without lights. And as we bounced along, the peal of tubular bells played '*Rule Britannia*' on their own. No one knew at that moment of history at what corner the advancing wave of field-grey might not lap over; this was not a popular tune, we felt, with the other side, but the road was empty and not a shot was fired. With Spring dawn breaking I was at Cassel on its hill top. One of the first houses of the town is, or was, the *Lion Noir*, whose landlord I knew. Under the counter of his bar I stowed the Chapel fittings, with rather a forlorn promise that we would retrieve them some day. As we lifted the bells they jangled a peal of farewell to Talbot House. For that, in all human expectation, was the end of its joyous adventure.

It is ten years later, the year 1928, in London. Down a side street near Victoria Station marches a row of boys, the tallest with a mandoline, the others playing guitars or violins as they go. Londoners stop and stare, whisper and smile; the musicians are scarcely conscious that they are doing anything unusual or outrageous. For they are German schoolboys, the guests of Toc H for a fortnight. The night of fear at Poperinghe (when the Kaiser did not come after all), the defiance of the tubular bells to field-grey, are far behind and forgotten. The boys play Goethe's old 'Hedgling Rose' and a brave new song of their own generation, 'With us the new time marches on'.

The following year witnessed a return visit, under the wing of Toc H, to these boys' school in Berlin. I led a party of fifty boys and a handful of masters from four great English schools to Germany for three weeks of that summer. How they lived together with boys and girls of their own age in a children's home in the pine forest and then walked together across Saxon Switzerland was reported in these pages at the time and cannot be retold here.

For the participants from both countries the visit 'rang a bell'. Only last week I received a letter from a German city where one of our schoolboys from that party is now British Consul. He describes the mood of depression in which he entered upon a visit to Berlin, on duty, in 1947. And then he writes:

"We drove through a blinding snowstorm to visit Hitler's Chancellery, and as I stood among the gaunt ruins of this symbol of the hollow pretensions of the Third Reich, with the snowflakes drifting silently through the gaping roof, I remembered an old address. I thought that if the house were still standing, there might be someone who could give me news of my old friends. I did not want to intrude on the privacy of a strange family, and sent my driver in to make enquiries. He came out beaming: I went and knocked at the door. I received a welcome I shall never forget.

"I had to catch a train back that evening, and we had twenty minutes in which to tell each other all that had happened in the years between. Old photographs were brought out, half-forgotten names remembered . . . A grand reunion was promised for the next time I came to Berlin. A month later we had it, with no less than nine of the old crowd who had been with us, not to mention their husbands, wives and children. We talked and sang far into the night, until I fell asleep on the sofa, very happy, for I had rediscovered friendship and faith in the future.

"The outlook now for Germany and Europe is clouded and grey, but of one thing I am certain. The seeds sown by Dr. K. (*the German headmaster*) and B.B. in 1929 have borne their fruit. The friendships then formed have stood the test of time and will last as long again."

After 20 years, then, our carillon is still in tune.

1938: Knell of the Old World

Yet another decade had gone by: it was now the year 1938. The 'Toc H Staff Conference, about seventy strong, was holding its annual week in a quiet corner of Hertfordshire. At the same time another conference, not at all quiet and attended by more like 70,000, was in session at Nuremberg—the Rally of the National Socialist Party. Its thunder, not so distant, echoed round the world; it broke in upon our intimate deliberations at Welwyn.

Often at meal-times I sat, with my plate beside the wireless set, listening to the menacing or wooing voices of Hitler, Goering, Goebbels, Rosenberg or Ribbentrop, relayed by any German station, and later I retailed to our Conference the gist of their whirling words. The conviction that war was intended grew day by day, war very soon or a little later. We even debated whether we should break up before the week was out and return to our Areas to stand by for whatever might come. And I remember that one young member of the staff, who twitted me with needless anxiety, was silenced when I said "You haven't got two sons of military age—it makes a difference". (It was not so very long before he and one of those sons were in North Africa, he on 'Toc H War Service, the other flying on forlorn hopes over Greece and Crete).

A brief reprieve was then given us. Our country bought a few months' respite at the expense of another country: 'Munich', however the case is argued, will never be a proud name in the English history books. And then the storm, so clearly presaged, broke. The hatreds and sufferings of 1918 were repeated; the hopes of 1928 were buried in ridicule and ruin. The dreadful discords we had heard issuing from Nuremberg were tolling the knell of the old world after all. Many things we held dear were to perish in the fire of the next six years, many more are still in danger. The ways of our lives, whether for better or worse, cannot be the same again.

It is now ten years later—1948. A few weeks ago I returned from a visit to Germany, my third since V.E. Day. This latest short incursion was not primarily concerned with seeing Toc H at work in the B.A.O.R. but with attending a conference of British and German educationalists—professors, headmasters and -mistresses, government officials and what not—organised by G.E.R. (German Educational Reconstruction), on whose committee I serve. I travelled with a party of twenty British and we joined forces with a party of fifty Germans, plus a few education officers of the British, French and American Control Commissions. There were some very distinguished persons there, on both sides, and some highly technical matters were discussed. What was I, who am no kind of expert in these fields, doing in such a gallery? And what has all this to do with Toc H?

Now when people say, as sometimes they do, that this or that is "not a Toc H subject", I would vary slightly the saying of an old Roman and answer "I reckon that nothing human is outside the concern of Toc H". And this conference of ours was intensely human. From the first moment it was a joyful meeting of friends, some old friends, tried in the fire of suffering and exile, some shaking hands for the first time. There were no cliques, no national or professional cleavages between us all the week; there were strong differences of opinion often but always a great underlying unity of purpose. Our main concerns were intellectual, but as the days went on it became clear that our work was based deeper, on spiritual foundations. In a final speech the British leader was able to sum up our endeavour in a sentence of Thomas Trehearne, the seventeenth century English mystic—"To think well is to serve God in the interior court."

This is not the place for any summary of our conference. That had been admirably done by the Editor of the *Times Educational Supplement* (May 29), with whom I shared a bedroom and a cake of soap all the week. One or two reverberations only, things that go on ringing in the mind from bells in tune. On the opening day I was put willy-nilly into the chair for three long sessions. My first shock of dismay became delight, for I found that the learned audience were prepared to be treated rather like a Toc H

guestnight. It had to be done in German (I knew enough English to be my own interpreter, which saved trouble) but it was not difficult, with such an eager company, to substitute the lighter, livelier touch for the portentous formality of German procedure. This 'rang a bell'; it was commented upon and followed by a German woman professor in the chair next day.

Then there was the place in which we met, the outbuildings of a vanished hunting lodge, which were built two hundred years ago by that Elector of Hanover who ruled England as George I. The clean, rather bare old place was set in the heart of a magnificent forest of pine and beech where Kaiser William used to hunt roebuck and wild boar. In these wooded hills we walked and talked with our German friends in the spare hours of afternoon. On one such walk a young tutor from a teachers' training college asked me to tell him about Toc H. I did my best, and he replied with a modest account of his own 'Toc H job', as we might well call it. With seven of his students he was lending a hand to a young Lutheran pastor in a voluntary venture they call 'The Island'. The scene is a hut in their town where they collect sick and homeless fellow-countrymen returning from P.o.W. camps in the East. Anyone who has seen the scarecrows who reach Germany from Russian imprisonment, gaunt men in rags, half-demented, creatures that once were men, will guess what is entailed. In the hut live two other volunteers, young women from old, noble families, who have trained as nurses. And the carpenter who fits up the hut is a major of the Reichswehr, suffering from a severe head wound but able to work with his hands. At the age of thirty-eight he has apprenticed himself to a joiner in order to be useful to his neighbours for no other reward. It is uphill work for them all, for their charges are often most untractable, my friend said; some have even forgotten their own names and have to be christened again. In its first year 'The Island' has befriended 120 of these forlorn men and restored many of them to useful jobs and new homes. As the young teacher talked to me very simply about this work and the faith that upholds it, it was like a bell ringing through the woods with a tone beautiful and clear, familiar because it was in tune with the best we know in Toc H.

There were many interesting and remarkable characters in our

company; there was one, the smallest figure of the party, that stood at moments head and shoulders above us all. Minna Specht (the name means 'Woodpecker') has been a pillar of G.E.R. since it was founded in 1942, a little wisp of a woman, over seventy years of age, suffering in body, indomitable in spirit. From a face lean and lined and sunburnt, a beautiful face you like to dwell upon, the bluest pair of eyes look out with humour and fearlessness upon the toughest problems in the world. Minna keeps a boarding school deep in the American Zone, a school for lost children, children whose parents died in gas-chambers or the blitz, children whose families, alive or dead, have vanished behind the Iron Curtain in the East. Every child in her school is a 'problem' to be solved, a person to be discovered and loved and won. As she talked of them to a group of us one evening, we listened to sound psychology, to common sense laced with humour, and—however unorthodox its expression—to the Christian gospel of love forgetting self. The calm, deep voice, speaking admirable English, that filled our little room, was like a bell whose note vibrates, long after it is struck, in the mind and memory. Its tune, if words could be set to it, might be 'Where Love is, all can be done'. We knew we were in the presence of a great educator, with a touch that belongs to those called saints.

Ringers' Practice

To sum up our many-coloured week of conference I touch upon one instrument which wove all its discrepancies into one tune, the typical German instrument—music. By good fortune a little orchestra of a dozen youngsters (the youngest a girl of sixteen) from a training college were holding a holiday course in our building. They opened our conference with half-an-hour of old music, they called us each morning at seven with a madrigal or a flute solo repeated, now near, now far, in the corridors, they played or sang to us at some unexpected moment in every day. A characteristic surprise overtook us one night as we came out from our final discussion in the conference room into the open courtyard. On top of the steps to the hall we found a quartet planted—violin, 'cello, flute and spinet. As we stood in little groups under the great lime-trees, they played a piece by an eighteenth century composer, unknown to most of us. Directly

above the dark roof and the staircase where the players were silhouetted in the light of a single lamp, rose the crescent moon, attended by three faint stars. And in the west, crowning a giant chestnut tree in flower, hung Venus, marvellously bright. Perfection, so rare a gift, was caught in that moment; we longed for this loveliness to last. Too soon it ended, and the young conductor turned to us with a slight bow and the words "The composer has been dead a long time. Now let us say 'Good-night'".

At the festal opening and closing of our conference the student orchestra played the same piece as their 'Hail' and 'Farewell'. It was written in the seventeenth century by a German composer new to nearly all of us—Johann Pachelbel, and it strangely fits my present argument. Round a most simple melody, played continuously by the 'cello and double bass, he builds an intricate and entrancing canon—and this bass melody is the slow chiming of bells beginning to tell the hour. It seemed almost a foretaste of that grandest ground bass in the *Sanctus* of the B minor Mass, where Bach sets his men's voices chanting 'Holy, Holy, Holy' in a great peal that rises and falls through the open doors of Heaven. With an air of dedication our little orchestra played the lesser master's music, their bows rising and falling together, the pale young soldier who had lost a leg swaying with his violin, the young girl bowed over the keyboard of the spinet, the leader over his 'cello. These young people had retreated (if you like to be critical) from the harsh facts of Germany today into the timeless world of music—say rather from the shadow world in which our present days are spent into a reality which will long outlast them. There is a danger in this mood, too common in the German mind, but there is healing too. It came to an end too soon for us and them, and when it ended my neighbour turned to me with "So long as these young people can do that, their country is alive and we need it".

Bell Foundry

A night at Hanover intervened between our conference and a few more days which, by Paul Webb's kindness, I spent in three places where Toc H Clubs are open. I shall not dwell upon the human wretchedness of an air-raid shelter, two floors below Hanover station, where I spent an hour of the evening,

nor on the problem of the homeless youngsters (120,000 boys and girls in the British Zone alone, the governor of a boy's prison told us) who hang about such places, living in the black market or by prostitution. I came up from that cavernous hall, crowded with some fifteen hundred people, almost physically sick with its foul air and its miseries.

That was the prelude to the next night spent in a small village and in the family circle of a true German home. There can be no contrast in Europe more striking than that between the rubble of a battered German city, where thousands live like rats, and the beauty of the untouched country-side. Here to outward seeming "everything in the garden is lovely"; you must look closer to see how serious is the problem of overcrowding of refugees from the East, unwelcome strangers in almost every house. We know something at home of the difficulties of evacuation, but here the cleavages are deeper, the scale far greater, the duration unforeseeable.

In our little house and garden that night none of these problems reared its head. All was neat as a new pin, the old-fashioned courtesies and customs were honoured. Three generations gave me welcome, from the aged grandmother to the five-year-old who hung round my neck. In the centre of the picture was the mother, wise and charming queen of this tiny state. From supper-time to breakfast I was completely at home, a member of the family.

After supper Hans and I walked out into the fields to talk about Toc H: that was the special reason why I had come. A dusky rose of sunset veiled the sky, flowers were closing as we paused in the trim village churchyard and from the copse behind it a nightingale was tuning his first bout of song. We walked for an hour round and round paths between the standing corn, for there was much to say. The German mind is philosophical and needs time: this contrast with our own had come out at every session of the previous week's conference.

Last year in England Hans had caught the infection of Toc H which our best members know. He had found in it truths and ways he was now resolved to pass on to his countrymen. But how best? That was the question we debated in our walk. Toc H, he had come to see, was much more than a British notion.

It is no copy-book code that can be imposed on strangers, no set of words to be literally translated with a dictionary, no full-grown flower that can be transplanted into a foreign soil. It is a spirit which must have its own way, a deep foundation on which every man, according to the style which is truly his own, can build a House where he will be at home.

The name 'Toc H' means nothing in German, its history belongs to another race, its ceremonies and traditions have grown out of a different temperament, even its prayers are cast in another mould. If these things are to be left on one side, where they already belong, what is left? Everything that matters—and matters most vitally for Germany at this critical time, was Hans's answer. He did not propose to attempt a translation of the Main Resolution—except of its four last phrases: 'To think fairly, to love widely, to witness humbly, to build bravely'. A literal translation of their words into German is supremely difficult. There is, to begin with, no German word for 'fair' (they often use the English one) because, in tragic fact, it stands for an idea foreign to the German mind; and so with each of the others, ideas less familiar in that country than in ours, far more difficult to transmit. Yet, Hans was sure these four ideas must be upheld as the essence of Toc H, twelve words as the sole basis of anything he would try to do and teach. In them resides the secret of new life, with them the good news of Christ can be made plain, on them can be founded the Christian lives of ordinary men. All this he said to me in the simplest terms.

The Toc H peal round the world is never complete. The frame which holds its bells is stout and sound; it will always hold another to enrich the combination. One such, I hope, may come eventually from Germany, where bell-founding is a famous art. If this comes to pass, the casting will be done by men like Hans, not many mighty but having the courage of their conviction. Their work will be very hard and we must lend them our hands where we can. In the past the clangour from their country has too often been of bells rung in alarm or as a signal for attack; it has heralded terror and suffering for themselves and others. Now they must mould stubborn metal so that it rings in tune with ours and inscribe upon it the great names of Love and Joy and Peace.

BARCLAY BARON.

Multum in Parvo

✠ HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN will lay the foundation-stone of the east wall of All Hallows, Barking-by-the-Tower, at 5 p.m. on Monday, July 19.

✠ THE WORLD CHAIN OF LIGHT will be observed during the twenty-four hours from 6 p.m. on December 11, 1948. At that hour the Prince's Lamp will be lit for the Ceremony of Light at the Birthday Festival evening in the Royal Albert Hall, London. Branches and other gatherings of members in places west of London to the Pacific Ocean can take their part in this act of world-wide unity by standing to their Lamps and other lights at six o'clock by their own time on the evening of Saturday, December 11. Those west of the Pacific, in New Zealand, Australia, Asia, Africa and Europe, should forge their links at six o'clock by their own time on the evening of Sunday, December 12, thus bringing the Chain to completion in London, where a Vigil will be maintained throughout twenty-four hours of the Festival. The hour should be noted: instead of 9 p.m. as in previous years, 6 p.m. will be the local time of observance on the Saturday and Sunday in sequence at each place in the two hemispheres.

✠ Padre JOHN DURHAM, who acted as Deputy Administrative Padre during Padre GILBERT WILLIAMS' travels in Canada, is leaving London to become East Anglian Area Padre. For family reasons he will not be going to India, as anticipated in the *Annual Report*.

✠ The Rev. NOEL TOMLINSON, formerly Area Padre in South Australia and lately in New South Wales, has returned to parish work at St. Paul's, East Brisbane. CYRIL REEVE has been appointed New South Wales Area Secretary. At the request of the Australian Executive, TOC H in New Zealand are releasing JACK SHAW to visit the Australian Festival in Sydney from October 21 to 26.

❖ The Services Club in JERUSALEM was closed on April 10, under military orders. The Warden, ARTHUR SERVANTE, then moved to the Club on the Suez Canal. He has had a spell in hospital after a nasty fall, but has now recovered and is on his way home.

❖ The Toc H SERVICES CLUB, Forest Close, WENDOVER, Bucks., was opened by Marshal of the Royal Air Force LORD TEDDER and dedicated by the BISHOP OF OXFORD on June 19. The Wardens are CECIL and NANCY STARBUCK. The Club open to service, and ex-service men, is mainly used by the R.A.F. apprentices and others at Halton and by families visiting men in hospital there.

❖ There will not be a Toc H Rest-tent at THE ROYAL SHOW AT YORK from July 3 to 10, as previously announced. The Y.M.C.A. are able to provide a twenty-four-hour service, including refreshments at night for the stockmen, so Toc H members are offering their voluntary services to assist the Y.M.C.A.

❖ OLYMPIC GAMES: Stadium District (W. London Area) is holding a Guestnight on July 28, at 8 p.m. in the Brotherhood Hall at Wembley, to welcome visitors to the Olympic Games, including Toc H members from overseas. Padre Gilbert Williams is giving a talk and it is hoped that a competitor and one or two visitors will also speak. Will any overseas member or visitor please accept this notice as a warm invitation to attend.

❖ TWO CENTRAL CONFERENCES have been held at week-ends in May and June, the southern one at Haywards Heath and the northern at Harrogate. Almost all the Area and Divisional Executives were represented at these useful discussions with the members of the Central Executive.

❖ The following resolution has recently been passed by the Central Executive and accepted by the Central Executive of Toc H (Women's Section): "With a view to the progressive development of close understanding and mutual support between the men and women members of the Toc H family, the Central Executive wishes it to be understood that there is no objection to, but much advantage in, men and women members meeting together at Branch, District or Area level whenever they feel that this will help them to serve the movement better. In recommending this course, the Central Executive wishes to make it clear that 'mixed meetings' does not mean units with a mixed membership."

The Elder Brethren

AUSTIN.—On June 12, the Rev. PERCY AUSTIN, aged sixty-three, one-time Padre of Coalville Branch. Elected 27.5.'41.

COOPER.—On May 27, LESLIE COOPER, aged thirty-one, a member of Willenhall Branch. Elected 18.11.'46.

DARCH.—On May 28, THOMAS ROBERT DARCH, aged sixty-eight, a member of Southborough Branch. Elected 20.12.'32.

DEVEREUX.—On June 14, HILDA DEVEREUX, ('Hilda Hughes') the compiler of the *Toc H Gift Book*, Nos. 1 and 2.

DRISCOLL.—On May 27, HARRY DRISCOLL, aged forty-five a member of Stifford Branch. Elected 12.5.'32.

EDMUNDS.—On April 23, BRINLEY KEITH EDMUNDS, aged fifty-eight, a member of Cross Keys and Risca Branch. Elected 6.2.'40.

GEMMELL.—On February 25, KENNETH THOMAS GEMMELL, aged sixty-four, a member of Central General Branch. Elected 1.1.'23.

JONES.—On May 11, G. L. JONES ("Jonah"), aged forty-one, a member of Arnold & Daybrook Branch. Elected 18.1.'29.

HILLYARD.—On March 28, after a long and painful illness, CANON GEOFFREY HILLYARD, M.A., aged sixty-three. Sometime member of Whitstable Branch.

MANCHEE.—On May 21, SYDNEY MANCHEE, aged seventy-three, a member of Brighton and Hove Branch. Elected 29.6.'40.

MILLER.—On May 10, HAROLD TIBBATS MILLER, aged seventy-five, a member of Central General Branch. Elected 23.9.'37.

SIMPSON.—On June 5, FRANK SIMPSON, after a very brief illness. Elected 17.3.'48.

SORSBIE.—On April 29, Brigadier-General ROBERT FOX SORSBIE, C.B., C.S.I., C.I.E. ('The Guvnor') aged eighty-two, a member of Bournemouth Branch. Elected 24.12.'26.



Allswell that Ends Well—III

More signs of progress in the newly-founded Allswell group in the South Midlands Area.

ALLSWELL SECRETARY TO AREA SECRETARY

DEAR FLIP,
Thanks a lot for seeing Sir Percival Chase. Jean and I were very disappointed you didn't have time to drop into tea afterwards, but I gather he kept you nattering for a long time and that you had to make a dash to Dewlap's guestnight.

How do I know all that? Well, Sir Percival came to our meeting again the next evening and gave us the gen. There was an awkward turn at the start, it was over Joe Hinkler. He is rather a rum chap who has got no real friends, been a bit funny, I think, ever since he left the Army. And a while back he started pinching things. They let him off the first time, but when he lifted a lot of stuff off a farmer near here he was juggled for a month. And it was Sir Percival who was on the bench and put him in.

Well, we were a bit sorry about Joe. In a place this size he is a marked man, he's lost his job and all that. So when he came out we got old Granfer Eyebright to go down and see him, and Granfer, after a lot of trouble, brought Joe to our meeting that night. Joe sat down in a corner, very shy, and then he spotted Sir Percival. I saw him grab for his cap and get ready for a bolt but Sir Percival was quick off the mark. He stepped, accidental like, across the door and held out his hand to Joe. The next minute they were sat down together. It all happened so quickly that I don't think any of our blokes noticed but me—they were moving about with tea-cups at the time. I only heard Sir Percival say "Come up and see me at ten tomorrow, we might be able to fix something".

We had a rattling good talk from G.G. on jobs and I think we shall get weaving properly soon. More when we meet.

Yours,

SIR PERCIVAL CHASE TO A FRIEND

My dear Bodger,

I've just heard that you are back on a spot of leave from darkest Africa. Why not run down here next week for a few days' fishing and bring the Missus—Clara would love to have someone to swap tall stories about the garden with. I've never known the mayfly as strong as this week, so don't put it off.

No hot news except that my mare's gone lame and that I have gone and got myself entangled in Toc H in our village. I bet you haven't done a hand's turn about it, bar the odd guinea, since the night we filled up our membership forms together in the Club at Deodali. We have a fine little crop of young ex-Service men amongst the group here, plus one grand old boy, any old age, who worked for my grandfather.

We were warned, you remember, that funny things happen in Toc H and there was one at our meeting last week. I bumped into a chap just out of quad—and it was me wot had sent him there for a month. A queer cuss, but I fancy really a case of what the bowmen of Crecy—I mean of the Great War—used to call 'shell-shock'; something happened to him on Dunkirk Beach. Any way, I found out that he's mad about growing things and have put him in my garden. After a week he has perked up quite a bit and now follows Clara around like a dog because she's a better craftsman when it comes to trenching asparagus and such. I think we shall make something of him.

Seen any of the old Burma crowd lately? Don't answer except in person. All you have to do is to wire time of arrival and we'll open an extra tin of sausages. And on Wednesday night (you are bound to overlap a Wednesday) I shall drag you down to our Toc H meeting in a white sheet as a lapsed member.

Always yours,

P.S. I hope you don't break things when you wash up. Our dinner set is running low.

Ecclesiastical Polity

AT A SOUTH MIDLANDS AREA EXECUTIVE MEETING

CHAIRMAN: "Any news, Flip?"

AREA SECRETARY: "Well, Long Boobly have netted £126 at the fête for their hut and there's a bit more to come in. Very

nice work—but we shall come to that presently.

“There’s a story about the new group at Allswell that’s rather fun. It hasn’t had time to get round yet, so I’ll tell you. You will remember the spot of bother we had with the Rector there. When I saw him I managed to sort it out and got him to promise that he would go down one night and meet the group. Actually Chas. Brick, their Secretary, who is a go-getter, did the attacking; he dug the Rector out one Wednesday a few weeks later and led him by the hand to the meeting. The Rector, name of Aumbry, is a good number but some folks would call him a bit of a ‘spike’, and his first shock was when he found himself drinking tea with the Padre of the group, Steadfast, who’s a young Baptist minister. I’m told they had never even spoken to each other, much less broken a bun together, before. As some of you may know, the Church v. Chapel feeling in Allswell has been bad for years. There’s a Church grocer and a Chapel grocer and the faithful mustn’t be seen going in at the wrong door—that sort of thing right through.

“When the jobmaster’s innings came he said he was looking round for new jobs, and the upshot was that the whole group volunteered to go along the next Saturday afternoon and put the churchyard in order. Apparently the old man who used to do it had outlasted about five rectors but was too twisted up with rheumatics to carry on now. The Rector was surprised but grateful, and the group duly paraded with the proper tools. They were well away with scything the grass, trimming edges and de-mossing tombstones when a dyed-in-the-wool Chapel lady looked over the wall and spotted old Eyebright (he’s seventy-five if a day but very game) playing with a mowing-machine in the precincts of the Scarlet Woman—and in his shirt-sleeves too. She was down at the Chapel grocer’s counter in the next five minutes to report that her deacon was already half-way to hell, and the story was soon all over the village, with knobs on.

“The next Saturday the group played a return match in Steadfast’s Chapel ground, where the nettles stood a yard high. Blessed if the same thing didn’t happen again, in reverse! An old boy—rabid Churchman but doubtful Christian—snooping behind his curtains across the street, saw his churchwarden (not even a Toc H member, mind you, but a visitor they had roped

in) up a ladder cleaning the Chapel gutters. The news of heresy was spread in time for the churchwarden to get a dirty look from several good people at Matins next morning.

"In a small old-fashioned place like Allswell these things count absurdly and can't be hushed up. It's make or break, and I rather fancy the group is *making* a new spirit quite fast. And I'm pretty sure they haven't a notion that the simple things they're doing answer to the grand names of Fellowship and Service that they read about in our Toc H literature. When any of you come across the group just drop a hint that they are doing their stuff, will you? It will buck them up."

A MEMBER: It sounds like Bunyan's *Holy War*—only they're storming Mansoul by accident.

No Busman's Holiday

ALLSWELL SECRETARY TO DISTRICT JOBMASTER

Dear Bluey,

I am afraid I'll have to miss the team meeting on Tuesday—working overtime at our firm. There is one thing I wanted to report, though I don't know if it really counts as a job.

The Long Boobly chaps are good friends of ours but can't come over easily. At least they can come over but there's no bus back after eight, so it's hardly worth while, they have to leave us before half-time. It is the same when we tried the other day to get to Gobbleston who keep on inviting us on a Thursday. None of our members has a car except Sir Percival and he is never free Thursday nights.

Anyway, we couldn't but feel that lots of Allswell people besides us must be in the same boat, if they want to get in to a picture in Gobbleston and such like, but nobody *did* anything about it. So we just canvassed round and collected more than 400 signatures here for a petition to the Bus Company. I sent this on and we hope the Company may take it up. If they do we feel sure it will pay them. The Allswell people seem quite bucked about it, and I hope the District Team won't feel our group has been interfering in public affairs that aren't its business. Let me know what they say about it, please.

Yours,

SOUTH MIDLANDS TRACTION CO. TO ALLSWELL SECRETARY

Dear Sir,

My Directors request me to acknowledge yours of the 24th ult., forwarding petition signed by inhabitants of Allswell regarding augmented omnibus services. My Directors considered this matter at their meeting yesterday and are disposed to accede to your request by putting on a later service on two or, possibly, three evenings a week between Gobbleston, Allswell, Long Boobly and intervening localities.

You will appreciate that this will entail considerable revision of time-sheets, etc. and cannot come into operation this month.

Yours faithfully,

TELEGRAM FROM GOBBLESTON SECRETARY TO ALLSWELL SECRETARY

Cheers for new bus strong party imploding Allswell tonight.

'The Younger to the Elder'

ALLSWELL SECRETARY TO DISTRICT SECRETARY

Dear Fortissimo,

Sorry to keep bothering you but I am a bit puzzled, being new to the game.

Last Wednesday, the first night the late buses were put on, some of the Gobbleston Branch members came over to our meeting. We only got a telegram that afternoon to say it would be a strong party, and we had a regular rout round to get some wads together for them. My wife managed pretty well—in fact as only three turned up in the end, we had a good bit of stuff over and turned it in to the Institution afterwards. But this isn't a grouse; we were right glad to see them and wished more could have come.

The point is just this. One of their members (no names, no pack-drill) gave a talk that upset some of our chaps rather. You see, they are keen youngsters and he has been in Toc H umpteen years, in fact a founder member of Gobbleston. His history of the old days was quite interesting but at the end he pretty well told us we were doing it all wrong, not according to the "Rules of the Road", some book we have never seen. There wasn't time to go into it as they had to make a dash for the late bus.

I could see that John Leader (he used to be their chairman) who was with them, was upset about it and he tried to talk to me privately afterwards and missed the bus. There was nothing for it but he should come home with me for the night. We had a bit of supper and went on talking very late, and then he dosed down on our sofa for a few hours and I got Charlie, the milkman, who has just joined our group, to run him into Gobbleston on his round at six next morning.

I like John a lot, he's a great lad when you get to know him. We had a heart to heart and he told me Gobbleston Branch was getting him a bit down. They haven't got any new members in since the war because the ex-Service chaps he's brought once or twice as visitors don't seem to cotton on to Toc H or come again. He says that the old members are real good chaps who worked hard to keep the Branch going right through the war but they are all "thin on top", he says, and "a bit too set". I hope I'm not telling tales out of school—I guess you know all this.

Well now, John wants me to bring a party from Allswell over on a return visit to his Branch, not just for fun but really to help his members to liven up a bit, he says. A pretty tall order, I told him, teaching one's grandmother to suck eggs. But he's bent on trying, so we've fixed a date, the 15th of next month. Meanwhile, how do we go on? Can you give us a few tips?

Yours ever,

To Sum Up

The young group has survived an unexpected little test of fellowship: they have provided an atmosphere in which extremes can meet and be brought nearer to each other. Then, they have undertaken an entertaining manual job together, which has not only proved useful and strengthened their own team but seems likely to have effects, quite unforeseen, on the whole spirit of their neighbours. They have followed this up by a simple piece of service to the whole community; anyone could have agitated for extra buses long ago, of course, but the fact is that no one else thought of doing it. And now, as babes and sucklings, they are called upon to teach truth to their elders—a challenge both to their imagination and to their modesty. How will they tackle it?

BALBUS.

Introduced by

"RIGHT, I'LL COME DOWNSTAIRS and meet him", said the Overseas Secretary, as he replaced the receiver. Down in the Reception room stood a short, smiling Chinaman. He was Hubert Lai from Toc H Hong Kong, visiting England, through the generosity of the British Council, to study Boys' Club methods.

The Overseas Sec. showed no surprise at meeting this member of the Family from the Far East because Jim Stevens, out in Hong Kong had 'done his stuff', like all thoughtful members, and had sent an air-mail letter a few weeks earlier asking Toc H H.Q. to look out for Hubert on his arrival. That the welcome by Toc H in the British Isles was appreciated has been borne out by subsequent visits of our Chinese friend who couldn't say enough in thanks for the way Toc H had made him feel at home in London, Manchester, Liverpool and other places.

"To welcome and seek the well-being of those commended to our friendship",—so runs the explanatory note on the first point of our Compass—Fellowship. A simple thing which when carried out brings real happiness to the seeker and the sought.

A Greek student calls with a note of introduction from a member in Alexandria who knows no one in London likely to be able to help his friend in a particular way. So he writes to Toc H H.Q. knowing that they will do what Toc H surely demands—welcome a friend from overseas.

A judge from Rhodesia, who is chairman of Toc H in that country; two members from New Zealand on a business trip to the Old Country; another from Accra; 'Pop' and Mrs. Gunston from Buenos Aires—all these, and many more from other lands as well are welcomed to London and invited to various functions being held at the time of their stay.

Forty-seven Francis Street, boasts no architectural attributes and the men and women who work in the small offices spaced

evenly like geraniums in a formal garden, each side of its corridors—these folk claim no 'new look' or priority as V.I.P's, but form part of a fellowship which can make the world a better place if for no other reason than that they commend, and receive commendations of, folk who move about the face of the earth.

Not all the visitors are here for business reasons, some call in, like a young man recently, who was shortly leaving home for Johannesburg. He came because he knew Toc H was a 'friendly show' and might be able to introduce him to someone when he arrived in Southern Africa.—Yes, of course this could be done; they needn't worry about not being members, because we don't. They need a welcome just as much abroad and Toc H serves *people* not just its membership. A note by air to Ossie Joseph in Jo'burg soon set things in motion in this case.

In Southampton a member asks if anyone in Singapore could look up his brother in the Services who had recently arrived there. Within eleven days of this request a letter had been received from Dickie Dines at Singapore who said "The chap you asked me to contact is sitting beside me as I write, having a cup of tea in the Toc H Club. He's 'tickled to death' at the friendly welcome, and sends sincere thanks".

So it goes on, day after day; the air-mail carries notes of commendation to all comers of the world where men and women are away from familiar things and need a hand-shake and word of welcome. This work could be greatly increased if the membership of Toc H really became alive to its possibilities. In another recent letter Dickie Dines asks, "Haven't more members got friends journeying to Singapore than merely the few names I have received?" Many opportunities are being missed because members are not using the 'winged word of welcome' through the Overseas Office at H.Q.

Often one hears today that it is difficult to interest one's friends in Toc H, yet here is one practical way which really works and through which more men can realise that Toc H is wider than these islands, and that there are members in lonely places ready and waiting to contact newcomers, on receiving news of their coming.

So, set to work in your Branch and get all your members to find out which of their neighbours and work-mates have sons,

cousins or uncles, going abroad, and then offer Toe II's hospitality to them. You may even win them to Toe II, you'll certainly earn the gratitude of that relative far away who receives a personal welcome from an ordinary bloke somewhere East of Suez or South of the Border.

H.C.D.

Good Camping

This short notice will be of topical interest to readers proposing to camp this summer, either with juveniles or a more adult party.

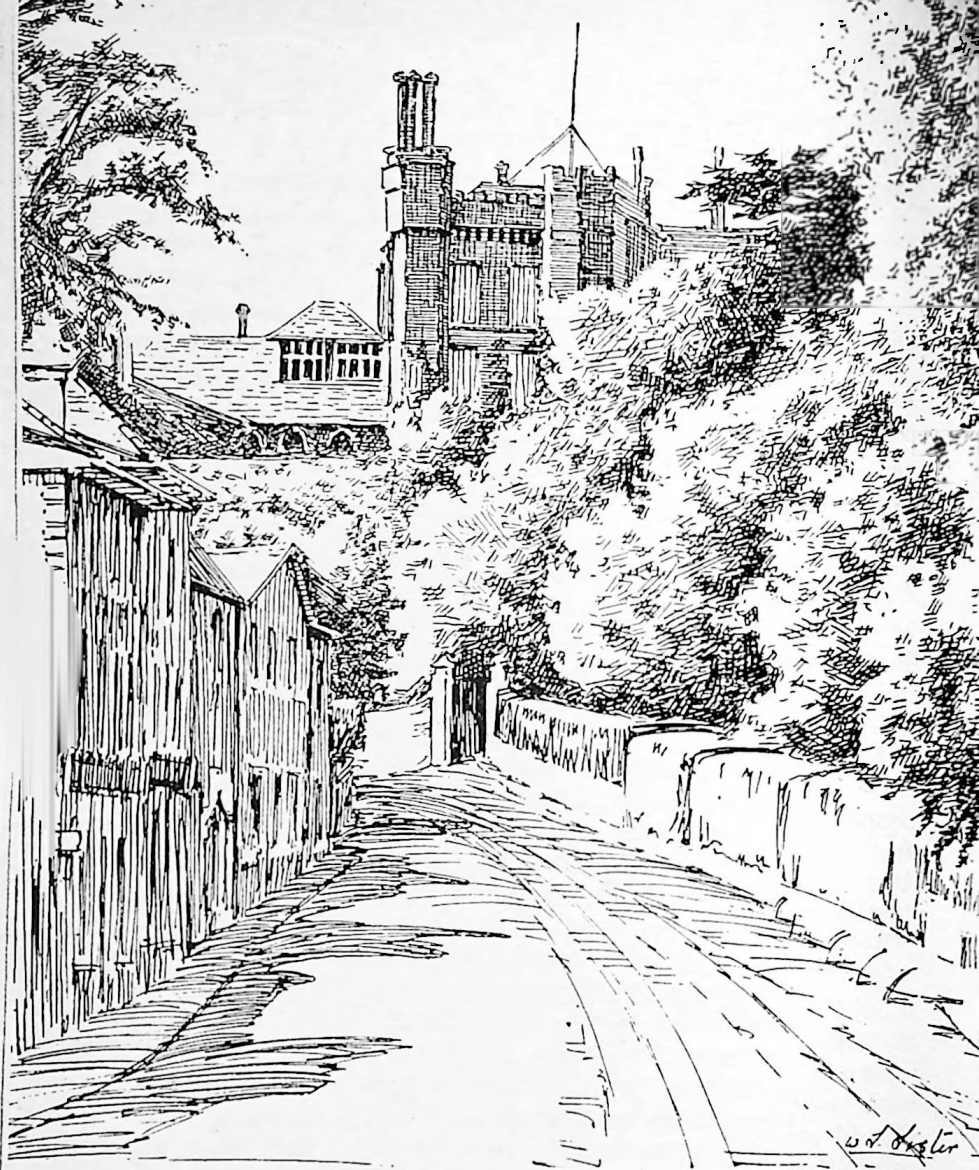
THERE ARE MORE THINGS than guy lines to trip-up the unwary camper, and time spent beforehand in recognising and planning the avoidance of difficulties can go a long way towards ensuring a successful camp.

Good camping cannot be learnt from a book, but the printed word and diagram can give us helpful pointers and here is a booklet* designed for just that purpose. H.M. Stationery Office call it 'Pamphlet No. II', but its sixty-four pages are packed with much camp lore and sound common sense that will be welcomed by both the novice and the experienced camper.

Designed primarily for the guidance of those taking young people to camp, its outline of the general principles of method and camp organisation can also be readily applied to grown-ups. The importance of a good standard of camp-craft is given emphasis with sketches and designs.

The appendices provide sample menus and tables of quantities, with due regard to the present Rationing restrictions, which should enable the camper the easier to thread his way through the maze of B.U.s., Points and weekly "Special Authorities". There are also useful lists of suggested equipment for camps both large and small, and with the help and guidance it gives it should greatly assist those who plan and organise to make their camps centres of happiness, inspiration and mutual service.

*"ORGANISED CAMPING", Ministry of Education, Pamphlet No. II, published by H.M. Stationery Office, York House, Kingsway, London, W.C.2. 1s. net.



FARNHAM CASTLE.

Surrey & Sussex at Farnham

"Not unto us . . . but unto Thy Name give the Praise"

FOR a thousand years Farnham Castle has received pilgrims, giving them shelter and protection. On June 13 Toc H Surrey and Sussex Area welcomed by the present Lord of the Castle, the Rt. Rev. John Macmillan, Bishop of Guildford. About 700 men and women—yes, and children too, came to make an act of Praise and Thanksgiving. The whole Family from the two Counties sat on the magnificent lawn listening to string music, and watching as the procession of clergy came from the Bishop's house to meet the banner bearers from Fox's Tower.

The atmosphere of past centuries contributed to the scene and it might well have been a village pageant of some hundreds of years ago that we were witnessing. The Rev. L. M. Charles Edwards, Vicar of St. Martin in the Fields, preached the sermon, which struck the note for all that followed.

Tea was served from a large marquee while a working-party of Farnham Branch men rushed the chairs to the Great Hall.

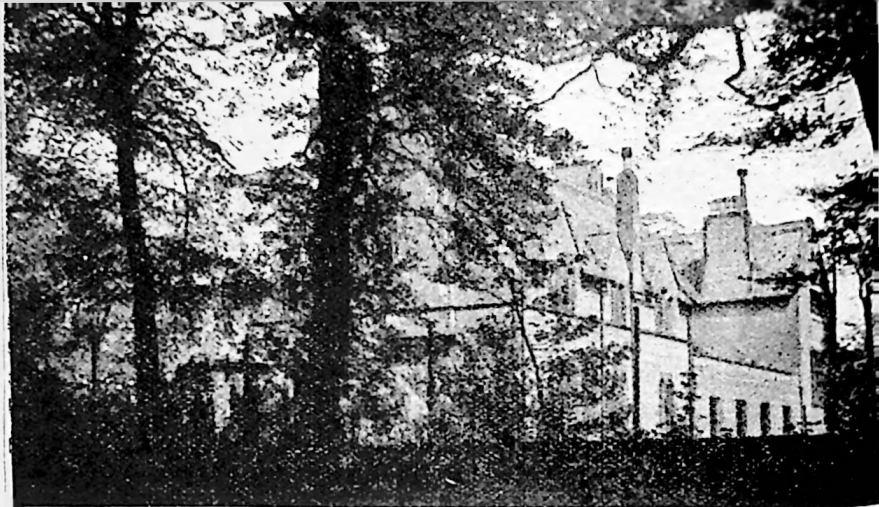
Then came the Guest Night—with many real guests present. 'Doc' Scott, the Area Chairman, introduced the Bishop of Guildford who, with great charm, welcomed the gathering to Farnham.

Then came a rousing rendering of "Sussex by the Sea" from the South Downs District followed, with much hilarity, by the performance of "The Gorgonzola Branch" by Guildford Branch.

'Light' was taken by Doc after the Lamps and Banners had squeezed through the crowd to their appointed places, and the Lamp for Northiam Branch had been kindled for the first time.

Wyatt Joyce, as Guest Speaker, with an impressive sequence of brilliant thoughts, claimed the attention of his audience; setting forth the purpose of Toc H. Travelling homewards, after Family Prayers led by the Area Padre, many left with a new hope that, with the power of God's spirit, Toc H has still a great part to perform, and a determination to create in the minds of men and women the sense that "those Feet" still "walk in England's green and pleasant land."

J.D.



Toc H Mark IV, Manchester.

On the Mark

In this article BILL HARRIS, Warden of Mark XX, Putney, speaks with the voice of experience.

IN THE BEGINNING there was a Mark. Those early days of 1920-1921 saw Mark I, Mark II and so on establishing the traditions and working out the schemes of the early pioneers. Toc H was 'under weigh' before the first Branch appeared on the scene. Branches come and go, but generally the Mark remains, an influence of incalculable value in a changing scene. In the early days the leaders of the movement came from Marks, and right down the years they have continued to produce men for leadership. Many Branches have ex-Marksmen members, and not a few of the Staff have learned their Toc H in a Mark.

In the beginning there was a Mark. Today it would be most interesting to ask each Toc H member his opinion about these Houses; but, frankly, it is doubtful whether many of the Family could reveal much knowledge of them. It is because of this that

this contribution to the JOURNAL is offered; in the hope that members will be challenged as well as informed.

At the present time eighteen Marks are operating, each in varying stages of development. Like the movement as a whole they are a living thing and throughout the history of Toc H, which, in fact, is the history of Marks, the "ebb and flow of things temporal" has been reflected in the changing scene. Like Branches and groups the impact of the individual has its effect with the inevitable result. Taken collectively the Marks have made their contribution to Toc H as a whole.

Let us look into a few of the questions that have arisen from time to time.

What is the Purpose of a Mark? Every time we repeat the Toc H Prayer, we say "Teach us to live together in love, and joy and peace; to check all bitterness; to disown discouragement; to practise thanksgiving; and to leap with joy to any task for others". Therein is the immediate purpose of Marks, "working for Thy Kingdom in the wills of men". It is an experiment in the art of living together in fellowship, and we bring together a mixed bag of fellows, youngsters in the main, who are given the opportunity and the privilege of experiencing these things. They subsequently go out into the world with the knowledge, indeed the conviction, that men of all classes and creeds *can* live together in love, and joy and peace, providing each shoulders his responsibility. They know, too, that a right relationship with one another is dependent upon a right relationship with God.

Who are the Marksmen? From whence do our hostellers come and are they members of Toc H? They come, recommended by schools, firms, Societies, members, Government offices and by chance. They come from a thousand sources. Membership is not a qualification, necessarily. Much depends upon the situation existing at a Mark at a given time. The Honorary Warden has the task of seeing he has a mixture in his house. Like the units, without such a mixture stagnation is natural. Again, we would not wish the Marks to preach to the converted; yet if the Warden realises the House is short of informed leadership he will look out for an experienced member to come and help him strengthen the show.

What about Finance? There is a time-honoured tradition in Toc H, "each according to his means". From time to time a standard rate will be quoted in connection with the accounts. To some it looks high, to others it seems low. The standard rate is the average amount to be achieved in order that the Marks may be self-supporting as a whole. It follows, therefore, that some men will be contributing above that average figure and others below. In fact, the rates vary considerably; and it is very proper with such a mixed family that they should. It can be seen, therefore, that the uninformed cannot possibly form an opinion on this subject, for such rates are arranged in confidence between the hosteller and the Warden. Year by year the accounts reveal the changing circumstances, economic and otherwise. Sometimes a deficit reveals its ugly head, sometimes a surplus elates us. On the whole the Marks down the years have supported themselves and have contributed to the family purse. A deficit naturally brings the inevitable questioning in train. There are folk, of course, who refuse to accept such a yardstick, for it is not difficult to imagine a Mark with a healthy looking surplus which will yet be a most unhealthy place. With such a long-term policy it is not unnatural for inconsistencies to appear. Finance must not be the first aim of Marks, any more than such an aim may be placed first for the movement as a whole. Such a target would corrupt the whole show. Nevertheless, money cannot be separated from the other, if more important, things.

The Mark Branch? This is a question which has been debated many many times. We must, of course, accept the position that a Mark Branch will obviously differ from the orthodox Branch. The fluidity of the membership brought about by the constant movement of hostellers must make for some instability. But this can be largely overcome by recognition of the fact and the development of a technique to deal with the situation. The Mark Branch will naturally spring from within the House, but there should be some members who reside in the near locality attached to it who realise their peculiar responsibilities and influence. They provide, more often than not, blessed continuity and can be a splendid reinforcement to the Warden and his team. The election of officers and executive should, therefore, be approached with these factors in mind and, at all costs, the

Branch that meets in the House as distinct from that which is a part of the House, should be avoided. There is much to be said for the banishment from the house of a Branch that has degenerated into the first category. Branch activities must be integrated with the work of the House.

The Mark and Hospitality. Meetings held in Marks by District Teams, etc.? What is the position? We are building a 'family' in each of the Houses, that is if we are trying to develop them as Toc H Houses. Think then, of our own families and our homes, being used of necessity. 'Families' cannot be built upon that basis. So the answer to the questions at the head of this paragraph is, "not necessarily". On the other hand, Marks are striving to build throbbing and lively communities (it is no rare thing for the men concerned to call themselves, quite naturally, families) and that being so the 'families' welcome opportunities to serve the wider family. A subtle difference, be it noted. Hospitality should not therefore be taken for granted, but accepted gladly.

What of Service? In its immediate neighbourhood a Mark is much in the eye, so to speak, and we sometimes make the mistake of expecting much more than it has the capacity to give. Some twenty to thirty fellows, according to circumstances, are to be seen in mass, their lives seeming to be an open book. A Branch Jobby who asks for four men for a job, will content himself with three volunteers, being quite unable to form an opinion on what time the other members could spare. However, a Mark Jobby must be ever aware that he must not draw conclusions from appearances, and he has no right to assume that because a fellow is apparently unoccupied that he should be available for a job here, there or everywhere. Of necessity the average young hosteller is busy preparing for life and that fact must be remembered. The Marks' biggest job is their own being and their own purpose. It follows that if this policy is pursued, service will quite naturally emerge. On the whole, Marks have small reason to be ashamed of their record. They should not be regarded as a pool of manpower available for all the odd jobs; if they are, then destruction will follow.

The ordinary member of Toc H can lend a strong hand with this job of Marks, probably the most productive of any with

which the movement has been associated. Firstly with his prayers and with his goodwill and understanding. There is no shadow of doubt that the volunteers in the leper fields have felt the sustaining effect of the goodwill with which the movement as a whole readily backs them. Remember, when you call at a Mark you may be shyly welcomed by a fellow who only came in yesterday and is perplexed about it all. The Warden may be out; being a normal person, he may be at the 'flicks' or having one at the 'local'. Maybe, one day, you'll stay for a time; as a member you'll be noticed and the hostellers will either gain or lose by your example. If you've enjoyed your stay, please don't treat the House as a cheap lodging house; if you haven't enjoyed your stay tell the Warden, he'll be glad to know, and do something about it.

With your affection, your understanding and your interest the forward movement of Toc H in the Marks will be tremendously reinforced. The measure of the Marks contribution is, to a large extent, dependent upon that interest. W.H.

Toc H for the Village

At a time when the extension of Toc H is much in many minds this account by HARRY TRAVIS (Louth Pilot) of the work of his Branch's 'extension team' should provide encouragement.

LOUTH in Lincolnshire is an old-world market town, situated between the wolds and the marshes, with many charming villages surrounding it. It acts as the hub of all agricultural and social life for a radius of fifteen miles.

The Louth Branch of Toc H has some outstanding jobs to its credit, including the serving of nearly 3,000,000 meals in three Talbot Houses in the town during the late war. Thanks to a good and sympathetic local paper which publishes reports of Toc H meetings and articles on Toc H matters, a desire has been created to know more about our movement, not least among



The Church and Manor House, Fulstow.

village people. The Branch, therefore, has seized the opportunity of taking Toc H to the villages, with gratifying results.

The first attempt was made, in October, 1946, at Grainthorpe, where personal contacts had been made by several members. A meeting was arranged in the village school, where two Louth members gave informal talks to a fair audience of village men and as a result it was decided to continue meeting once a fortnight. The first job they tackled was to arrange a supper and concert for the old people over sixty-five; the local drama group was co-opted and put on a first-class show. This effort put Toc H on the map in the village and it has not looked back since then. A sum of over £30 was raised for the Lindsey blind by a whist-drive and collection, the local war memorial is being cared for by the unit, and so on.

The next approach was to Fulstow, a charming village with a windmill standing sentinel at one end and its ancient church at the other. On a lovely June evening the Louth members assembled at a poultry farm, where they had invited (by hand-bills) any men of the village to join them. About twenty came, and the whole company was initiated into the mysteries of Rhode Island Reds (not to mention "pure-bred Brown L. x R.I.R."). At the end of the visit the ceremony of Light was held in the incubator room, with the Lamp crowning a mammoth incubator: it made a deep impression on the visitors.

Then the whole party went off together to the village church where the Louth Branch padre spoke briefly on the Four Points of the Compass and the Vicar closed with prayers. Local hosts provided refreshments afterwards.

A week later the Branch went over again to play bowls with the villagers in a garden. Contacts thus made were followed up, and during the autumn a meeting was held in the school-room. Seventy villagers were present to enjoy the fellowship and hear more about Toc H, and the sequel has been a very strong unit, comprising a good mixture of men with the true spirit.

At the twin villages of Grimoldby and Manby two contacts already existed and the spade work was easier. After one or two preliminary meetings a very promising unit is now meeting weekly. This month it is planned to tackle another village, North Heresby, eight miles from Louth: the evening is to start with a visit to a nursery garden and end with a short service in the schoolroom.

As a result of these efforts so far three Rushlights have been presented—on March 11 this year to Fulstow group, to Grimoldby and Manby on the following night and to Grainthorpe on March 15. Within a month twenty-four members had been initiated.

The villages are a grand field for the future development of Toc H, and extension is a job which all Toc H members can get a kick out of. There must be dozens of units which have promising villages within easy reach where the experiment can be carried out. Moreover the villages today are crying out for some new forms of communal life. It is the experience of the writer that where Toc H is established in the villages a grand spirit of fellowship and service is developed.

Three essential points are necessary in the formation of a village unit. First, plenty of publicity; second, personal contacts by the right people; third, unit meetings in the village with a definite programme arranged beforehand—but let the proceedings be informal. The first meeting should be of an explanatory nature with a strong emphasis on Toc H as a Christian movement, after which talks on fellowship and service can be given.

H.T.



Artist to the Branch

THE BRANCH MEETING took an unusual form when members and friends of Kennington T. C. H. were recently given a demonstration in the art of painting a picture. The artist was George S. Fraser, D.A., reproductions of whose fine picture of the Upper Room will be familiar to members, and whose paintings on beaverboard replacing the large sheets of plate glass in the blitzed windows of St. Stephen's Club, Westminster, delighted thousands of Service men during the War.

He commenced by inviting his audience to select a subject and, a mountain sunset scene with wooded foreground being suggested, he quickly made a charcoal sketch on a large sheet of paper. This done, he turned to the canvas and commenced to paint, pausing occasionally to describe the processes of his art.

While the painting was in progress, Arnold Brown, another Branch member, took the photograph of the work reproduced above. All present were impressed by the skill of the artist and a most interesting and instructive evening given to the Branch.

Building in Jersey

After months of planning the new H.Q. at St. Helier was opened on Thursday, May 13th, by His Excellency the Lt. Governor, Lt.-General Sir A. E. GRASSETT, K.B.E., C.B., D.S.O., M.C. The first step in this courageous venture was the gift of a German hut offered by the States department "free on site". The requisite site was provided by Mrs. Gruchy, who generously sacrificed her walled garden at the junction of two important roads. By ingenious planning the architect—or in other words the Chairman of the Jersey Branch—contrived to fill the site neatly with a building at once comely and commodious. The accommodation provides a hall to seat over 250 with a fitted stage, a reading room, a chapel, a meeting room, a kitchen and canteen and two cloakrooms. The building is attractively decorated both inside and out. Financial help has been given both by the local Youth Committee—who hope to make regular use of the premises—and by the Central Finance Committee of Toc H.

The following account is contributed by DICK TURPIN, a member of the Jersey Branch. Dick was a lance-bombardier in the R.G.A. in World War I and discharged medically unfit in 1918; he has been confined to his bed with arthritis since 1922 and totally blind for most of that period. By the kindness of his fellow members and the States Telephone department he was kept in touch with the celebrations by microphone and loud speaker throughout the week-end. Though two miles away, he was the life and soul of the meetings.

THE main hall was filled with over 250 guests representing all sections of the Island Community and I pictured the assembling of the guests up to the moment when H.E. the Lt. Governor and Lady Grasset arrived. Those supporting H.E. included, The Bailiff of Jersey, Sir Alexander and Lady Coutanche, Mrs. Gruchy, the donor of the site, Harold Howe, Toc H Administrator, Col. Footner and 'Cris', the chairman of the Guernsey Branch.

The Ceremony was presided over by Harold Stephens, the chairman of the local Branch and the real inspirer of the drive for the new H.Q. After mentioning some of the features of the new scheme, he called upon His Excellency to address the meeting and to declare the building open.

The Governor wished the house every success and commended its work to all present, and declared it open. Short speeches followed from Sir Alexander Coutanche, the Administrator, Col. Footner and Cris. Two outstanding comments in these speeches: Harold Howe said, "You have the work to do, you have the

tools and it can only be the human element that can fail; and knowing something of your team here I do not think that is likely"; Cris stated that in spite of all the "shortage of material and labour in the world to-day, there was no shortage of material or labour in the work of the Kingdom of God."

After the speeches the Ceremony of Light was taken by Sir Alexander Coutanche from the stage which was beautifully decorated with palms and flowers. This I could sense was a most impressive moment in the proceedings.

After prayers taken by the Branch Padre, Reg Jeune, the local secretary, invited all the guests to tea. During the evening members of the public were shown round the premises; from all came expressions of surprised admiration and good wishes.

On the following Sunday and Monday an excellent Training Week-end was held, all members being housed and fed at the Headquarters. Early Sunday morning Jersey members welcomed Guernsey men at the harbour and proceeded to the H.Q. After breakfast the first Service was held in our beautiful chapel. The members then adjourned to the meeting room for the opening session of the week-end. Two other sessions during the day kept the men busy. Fun and games and prayers ended the day's programme. On Monday morning there was another session with valuable suggestions on future policy. In the afternoon the members were joined by their wives and friends and by the members of the Women's Section and went by charabanc for a trip round the Island, returning for dinner at eight p.m.

The members were sorry that they could not take 'Dick', the microphone with its white face, with them for this trip. This was the only time during the week-end that the microphone was silent; even in the early hours of the morning mysterious noises came from the loud speaker; at one period it was the chairman searching for the top half of his pyjamas, which had somehow mysteriously disappeared.

At the closing meeting after dinner Harold Howe summed up the week-end's work. The closing prayers in the chapel left everyone with the assurance of a benediction.

Early Tuesday morning the Guernsey men were escorted to the boat and left with the feeling that they had had a wonderful time of 'recreation' in the work of Toc H.

DICK.



The Backwoodsmen of Macclesfield

A PILE OF FELLED TIMBER, lying on the site of the Macclesfield Corporation's afforestation scheme, related to last winter's fuel shortage, gave an idea to the local Toc H Branch. Application to the Borough Council eventually brought agreement for them to have three tons for cutting. The Council went further and also offered full use of equipment on the site.

Now, the idea has been translated into action and at weekends, on the hillside beyond the town, men from the Branch are hard at work. Each shift finds its 'knotty problems', but these are solved by Frank, a member who spent several years felling and sawing 'real' trees in Canada.

Before another winter has set in, the Branch will have distributed their logs amongst deserving cases, mainly aged folk, in the town, and a good job will have been done. (*Passing thought: There must be many similar tons of timber dotted about throughout the country.*)